



STATE OF IOWA

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For Immediate Release**

USDE GRANTS FULL APPROVAL TO IOWA PLANS FOR HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS AND STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

(DES MOINES, Iowa) December 22, 2006 – The United States Department of Education has approved Iowa's [Highly Qualified Teacher \(HQT\) plan](#) to assure all students have access to quality teachers, as well as the state's [student assessment system](#) that assures all students are regularly tested and the public is informed of test results. Both plans are required as part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

To gain HQT plan approval, the Iowa Department of Education had to prove that all Iowa teachers 1) have earned a bachelor's degree, 2) have received full state certification or licensure, and 3) can demonstrate that they know each subject they teach. In addition, the state must measure the extent to which all students have highly qualified teachers, particularly minority and disadvantaged students; adopt goals and plans to ensure all teachers are highly qualified; and publicly report plans and progress in meeting teacher quality goals.

The state plan describes how new teachers will demonstrate subject matter competency by:

- New elementary school teachers must pass a rigorous state test on subject knowledge and teaching skills in reading and language arts, writing, math and other areas of the basic elementary school curriculum for the next two years.
- At the middle and high school levels, new teachers must complete an academic major or coursework equivalent to an academic major, an advanced degree or advanced certification or credentials.
- Experienced elementary, middle school and high school teachers must demonstrate competency through an evaluation based on Iowa teaching standards.

Most of the teacher quality measures have been in place in Iowa for many years; however, federal officials last summer initially rejected Iowa's proposed test for new elementary teachers, the Iowa Department of Education Student Teacher Evaluation (IDESTE), which was developed by officials from the Iowa Department and colleges with teacher education programs. As a result, the state has now adopted the PRAXIS II as the state test for new elementary teachers on an interim basis while it works to revise and gain federal approval for IDESTE.

Full Approval for Student Assessment System

To gain full approval for the state assessment system, the Iowa Department of Education had to prove Iowa's education standards and assessments meet all federal requirements, including:

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- academic content standards in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science;
- student achievement standards in reading/language arts and mathematics;
- alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities;
- assessments in grades 3 through 8 and high school in reading/language arts and mathematics; and
- alternate assessments for those subjects.

“Federal approval is significant because it provides evidence to the public that they can have a high level of confidence in the state’s education system, and means Iowa remains eligible to receive federal program and grant funding,” said Iowa Department of Education Director Judy Jeffrey. “It also allows the state to be eligible for a growth model assessment system. Iowa has submitted an application to the USDE to allow the state to use student growth on the Iowa Tests as a measure to determine if a school or district is making adequate yearly progress.”

Additional information on the federal Highly Qualified Teacher provisions and assessment system requirements can be found at www.ed.gov.

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